Looking Back, Nurturing Emerging Sprouts and Pruning Unwelcome Shoots

Towards Quality Education for All

Presentation to the Symposium on Teacher Education for Inclusive Education, 2-4 July 2019, Emerald Conference Centre, Vanderbijlpark
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Presentation Outline

• Purpose
• Introduction
• Envisaged Learner
• Reflections on the Policy Promises
• Concluding observations on the initial report of South Africa
• Understanding Meaningful Access
• The Dominant View
• Teacher Agency and Resilience
• Key Questions
• Reflections on Change Management
• Recommendations
• Conclusion
Purpose

To present some key issues regarding the implementation of Education White Paper 6 to the Symposium on Teacher Education for Inclusive Education, for consideration and discussion.
Introduction

• Education for All, is a seductive promise that seemed straightforward and simple to implement, but has still not been fully realised (e.g. 125 million children are not acquiring functional literacy or numeracy).

• The National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030 envisions:
  – a South Africa where everyone feels free yet bounded to others; where everyone embraces their full potential, a country where opportunity is determined not by birth, but by ability, education and hard work; and that
  – by 2030, all South Africans must have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes.

• Action Plan 2019. Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030, contends that [making] sure that every young South African receives quality schooling is an urgent need.

• This is what forms the core substance of our work as a system.
Envisaged Learner

• **Identify and solve problems** and **make decisions** using **critical and creative thinking**;

• Work effectively as **individuals** and **with others** as members of a team;

• **Organise and manage themselves** and their activities responsibly and effectively;

• **Collect, analyse, organise** and **critically evaluate** information;

• **Communicate effectively** using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;

• **Use science and technology** effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and

• **Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems** by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.
## Reflections on the Policy Promises

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<tr>
<th>Policy Imperative</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Remedial Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative improvement of special schools</td>
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<td>• Qualitative improvement of <strong>infrastructure and resources</strong> in special schools, including safety and accessibility issues.</td>
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<td>Phased conversion of special schools to resource centres</td>
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<td>• Develop a clear plan to <strong>build capacity to support other schools</strong> as part of district support service.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Leverage</strong> on the Universal Services and Access Obligations project (USAO).</td>
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<td>Institutionalisation of the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support and curriculum differentiation.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Institutionalise the Policy on SIAS across the system</strong>, starting with the Foundation Phase.</td>
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<td>• Move to <strong>subject-specific curriculum differentiation</strong> as a mechanism to ensure curriculum access for all learners across the system.</td>
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<td>Mobilisation of out-of-school children of school-going age</td>
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<td>• Develop a <strong>clear management plan</strong> to ensure that children in special care centres have <strong>access to publicly funded education</strong> – explore models.</td>
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<td>• Develop a <strong>clear mechanism</strong> for dealing with the issue of <strong>waiting lists, fees in special schools and hostels</strong> - increase access to full-service schools.</td>
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<td>Building capacity in full-service schools</td>
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<td>• Develop a realistic, implementable programme for <strong>building capacity in full-service schools</strong>.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Explore provincial funding options</strong> (e.g. Programme 4.2) for strengthening of full-service schools.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Phased admission of learners with disabilities</strong> in full-service schools.</td>
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<td>Strengthening management and governance in special schools</td>
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<td>• Integrate special schools into <strong>existing management and governance programmes</strong>.</td>
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<td>• Effectively implement <strong>turnaround strategy for special schools</strong>.</td>
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<td>Establishment of <strong>functional district support teams</strong> (DST)</td>
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<td>- <strong>Profile</strong> all district support teams and design a rigorous support programme.</td>
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<td>- Explore incremental introduction of the model of itinerant support teams.</td>
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<td>Stakeholder management – advocacy, communication and information</td>
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<td>- Develop a schedule and plan for regular meetings with stakeholders – clear protocols for stakeholder invitation, participation and management.</td>
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<td>Improving <strong>access to the National Curriculum Statement</strong></td>
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<td>- Finalise policy statements for the CAPS Grade R-6 for SID.</td>
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<td>- Strengthen subject advisory services to provide curriculum support to all schools, including special schools.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Leverage on existing work</strong> to ensure that teachers have skills in specialised disability-specific areas.</td>
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<td>Building an inclusive education and training system</td>
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<td>• Review the implementation of Education White Paper 6.</td>
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<td>• Rigorous, integrated and coherent policy implementation at provincial, district</td>
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Concluding observations on the initial report of South Africa

- Barriers against students with disabilities to access mainstream schools, including discrimination in admissions to school, long distances, poor transportation, lack of teachers trained on inclusive education and in sign language, Braille and Easy-Read skills, lack of accessible curricula, and negative societal attitudes opposing attendance of children with disabilities to regular and inclusive schools.

- Intensify efforts at allocating sufficient financial and human resources for reasonable accommodations that will enable children with disabilities, including children with intellectual disabilities, autism and deaf or hard of hearing, to receive inclusive and quality education, including engaging in systematic data collection, disaggregated by sex and type of impairment, on the number of children mainstreamed into regular and inclusive schools and dropouts.
Understanding Meaningful Access
The Dominant View

- Teachers often believe that and/or are compelled to adopt one size fits all – one way is suitable for and benefits all learners.
- Learners are often expected to continue even if they are still uncertain about what has been covered, resulting in the accumulation of learning deficits.
- The cost of deficit accumulation is devastating.
Teacher Agency and Resilience

• The current situation requires teachers who can act purposefully, constructively and professionally under difficult circumstances.
• These are teachers with a solutionist disposition, who will not give up on a learner.
• These are teachers who will pick up their learner a hundred times, who want to get it right for every child and never even once think to themselves: “maybe this child was not made for it”.

[Diagram showing steps with the words: I can’t do it, I want to do it, I’ll try to do it, I can do it, I will do it, Yes, I did it!]

Which step have you reached today?
Teacher Agency and Resilience

- There has recently been significant emphasis on the importance of being an empowered teacher.
- An empowered teacher is not the same as being a powerful teacher.
- While empowered teachers can have power and powerful teachers can be empowered; it is possible to be powerful without being empowered.
- Empowered teachers are those who can take the opportunity to exercise their own professional judgment without fear of being politically incorrect.
- Empowered teachers are those that are provided with encouragement, space and support necessary to take risks and experiment.
Teacher Agency and Resilience

- Being an empowered teacher means having **enough resources** (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) and **freedom** to provide every student with the education that they deserve.
- Teachers who have not yet experienced empowerment are often **unable to fully personalise their teaching to the needs of each student** – they adopt a one-size-fits-all approach in almost everything that they do.
- Empowered teachers are **themselves self-directed learners** and are capable of producing **self-directed learners**.
Key Questions...

- What **conditions** must be **eliminated** and/or **created** to ensure a **pedagogy of possibility** that is underpinned by the principles of **equitable access to education for all**?
- What **cultures** must be in place to **build**, **nurture** and **maintain** teacher **agency** and **resilience**?
- How can teacher development, in its various forms, **manipulate these cultures** to give us such a teacher?
- How must continuing professional teacher development be configured to become an **instrument of teacher education for inclusive education**?
- What **levers are available** for building an inclusive education system?
The Nature of Inclusive Education

• Inclusive education is not a one-man show; it comes about as a result of collaborative work – requires a ‘we are in this together’ attitude.
• Individuals and organisations (often with multiple interests) come together and contribute their expertise for the benefit of a shared objective, project, or mission.
• This implies that, in order for inclusion to work, players need to learn how to collaborate, find their place in the chain, understand how to shape their actions and movements so that they produce what is good for all.
• The quality and value of collective effort will be measured and determined through improvements at the level of the school and classroom.
Reflections on Change Management
Reflections on Change Management

• Acknowledge the existing situation, prepare yourself for a paradigm shift, ensure collective clarity of challenges, identify, acknowledge and accommodate concerns, fears and uncertainties, alignment of interests and expectations, develop collective mechanisms to replace it with a desired situation.

• Identify incentives for collaboration, influence networks and islands of effectiveness.

• Identify good practice principles for the successful governance of collective action (based on the alliances that bind them together) – multistakeholder governance.

• Allow incremental implementation, tailored to the local context - spaces for experimenting, learning from action and each other, adapting and moving forward, and regular communication – reality of progress rather than illusion of progress.

• Monitoring and evaluations mechanisms to provide a feedback loop and strengthen implementation.
Recommendation

It is recommended that the Symposium on Teacher Education for Inclusive Education consider the presentation for discussion.
Conclusion

A teacher is not someone who has a qualification; it is someone who has a heart...and a qualification.
Thank you!

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